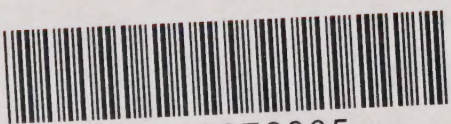
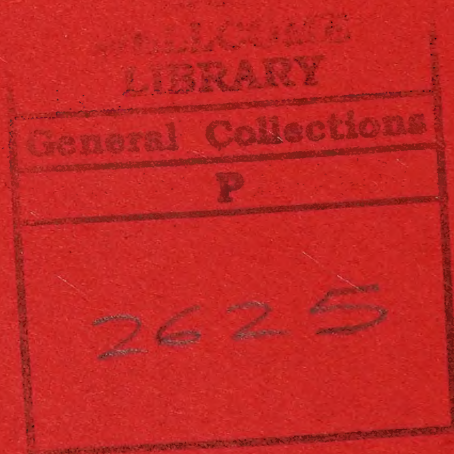


THE
ROYAL HOSPITAL
CHELSEA

Price : One Shilling



22502872905

THE
ROYAL HOSPITAL
CHELSEA

IN SUBSIDIUM ET LEVAMEN, EMERITORUM
SENIO, BELLOQUE FRACTORUM, CONDIDIT
CAROLUS SECUNDUS, AUXIT JACOBUS
SECUNDUS, PERFECERE GULIELMUS ET
MARIA, REX ET REGINA,—M D C X C I I.

(Inscription over the Colonnade in Figure Court)



Sir Peter Lely

KING CHARLES II

Council Chamber

THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

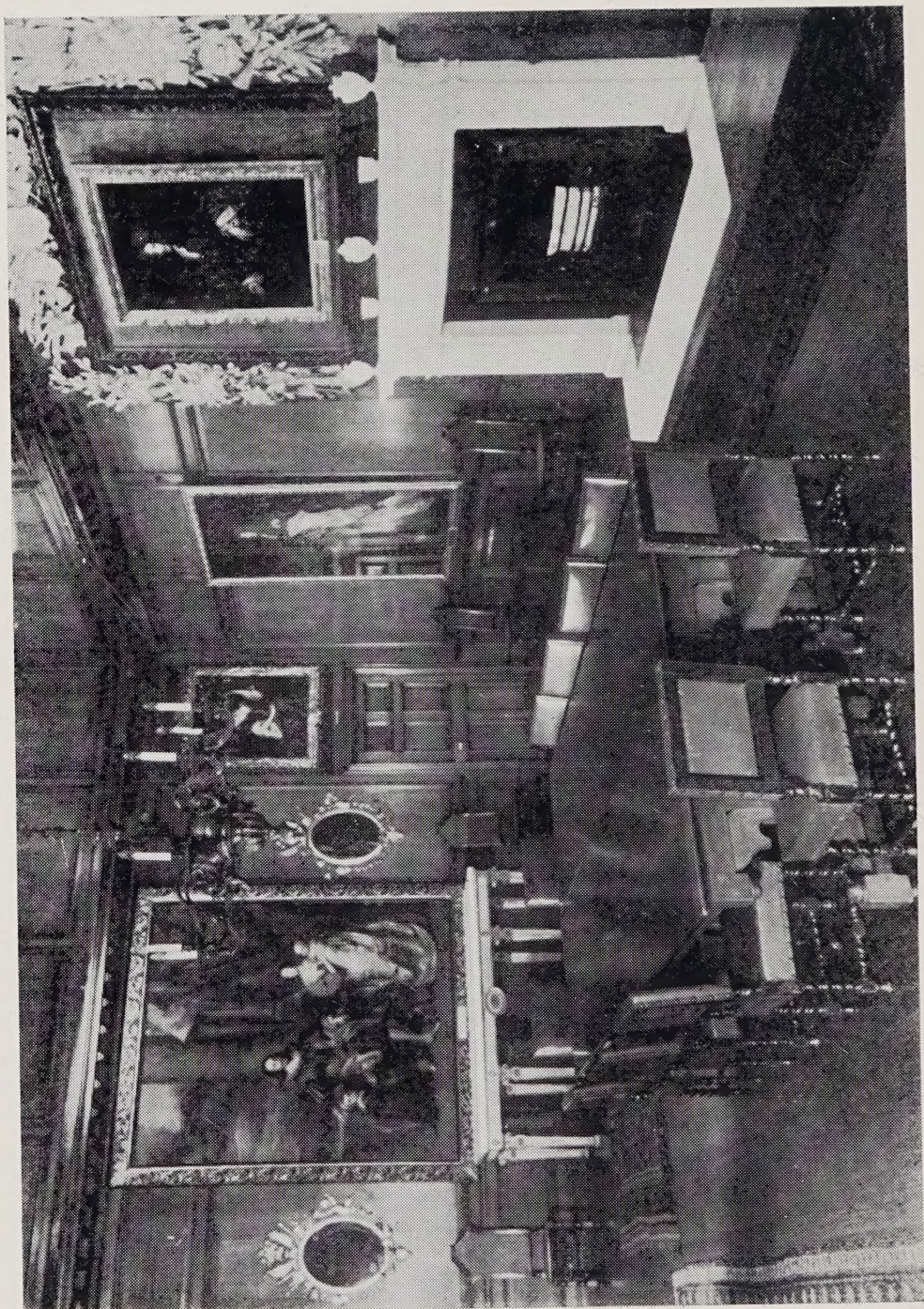
HISTORICAL NOTE

The Foundation

The Royal Hospital, Chelsea, was founded by King Charles II in 1682 as a retreat for veterans of the regular army who had become unfit for duty, either after 20 years' service or as result of wounds. The re-establishment of a standing army 21 years earlier had made some such measure urgently necessary, and indeed, only two years before, the King had begun building a hospital at Kilmainham, near Dublin, for the veterans of the Irish Army. The provision of a hostel, rather than some system of pensions, was undoubtedly suggested by the Hôtel des Invalides, Paris, that had been founded by Louis XIV in 1670, and about which Charles II had received glowing reports from his son, the Duke of Monmouth, who visited it on two occasions. There is no evidence whatever to show that the King was influenced by his mistress, Nell Gwynne, as popularly believed, or in fact by any consideration except the welfare of his old soldiers.

Finance

Possibly because the royal revenue was quite inadequate for the country's needs, Charles II received no support for his ambitious project from the Treasury Commissioners, with one notable exception. Sir Stephen Fox, who had served as Paymaster-General for many years and still controlled the Pay Office through one of his sons, undertook entire responsibility for the management of the future Hospital. Furthermore, as the King could only contribute about £7,000 and little more was forthcoming from subscriptions, Fox surrendered his commission of fourpence in the pound deducted from Army pay, which had been granted him in return for his services in raising money for the Army. This and other deductions from Army pay and pensions continued to be the Hospital's main source of revenue until 1847, since when it has been supported by Parliamentary votes, supplemented by a relatively small income derived from a Prize and Legacy Fund.



COUNCIL CHAMBER

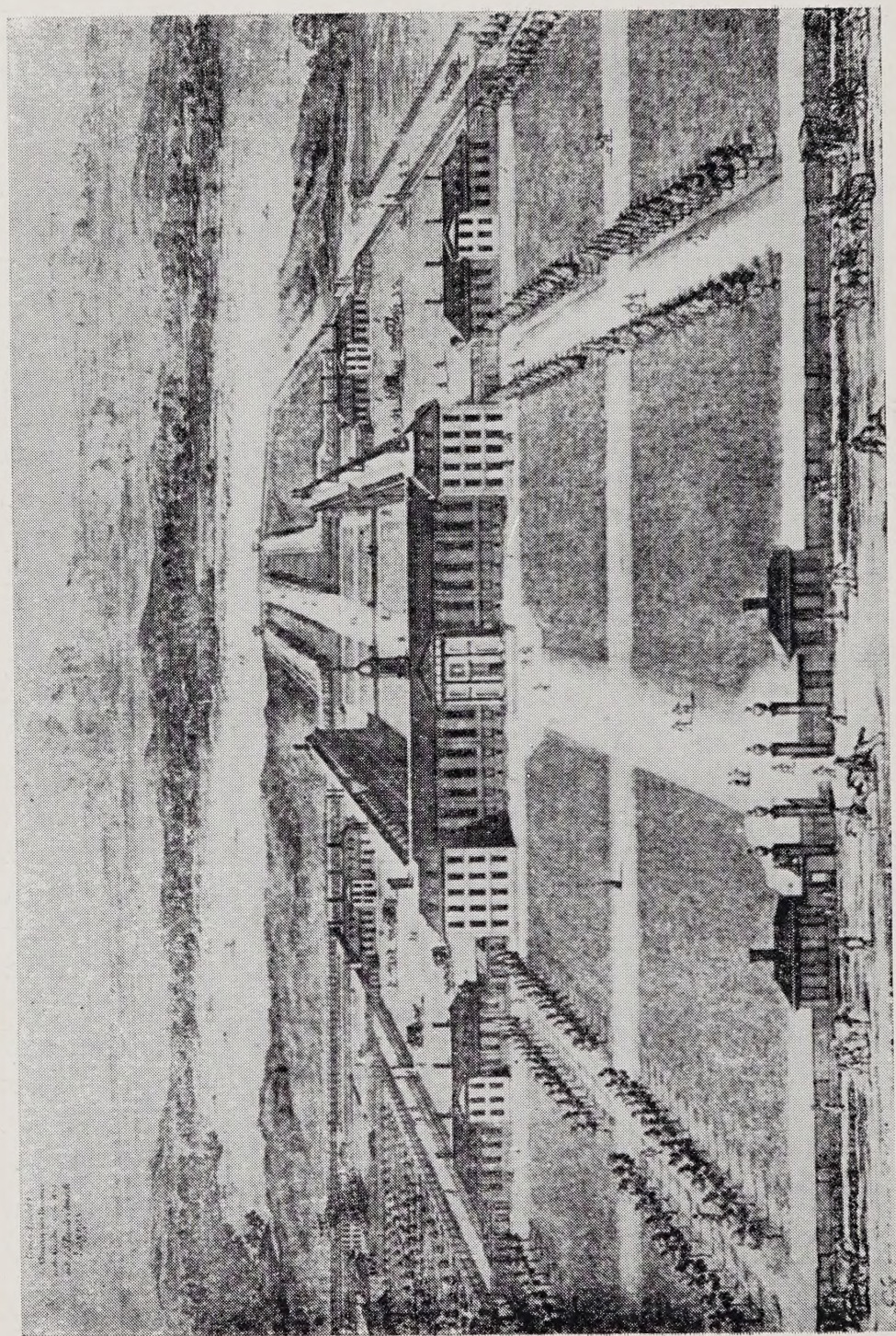
THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

The Site

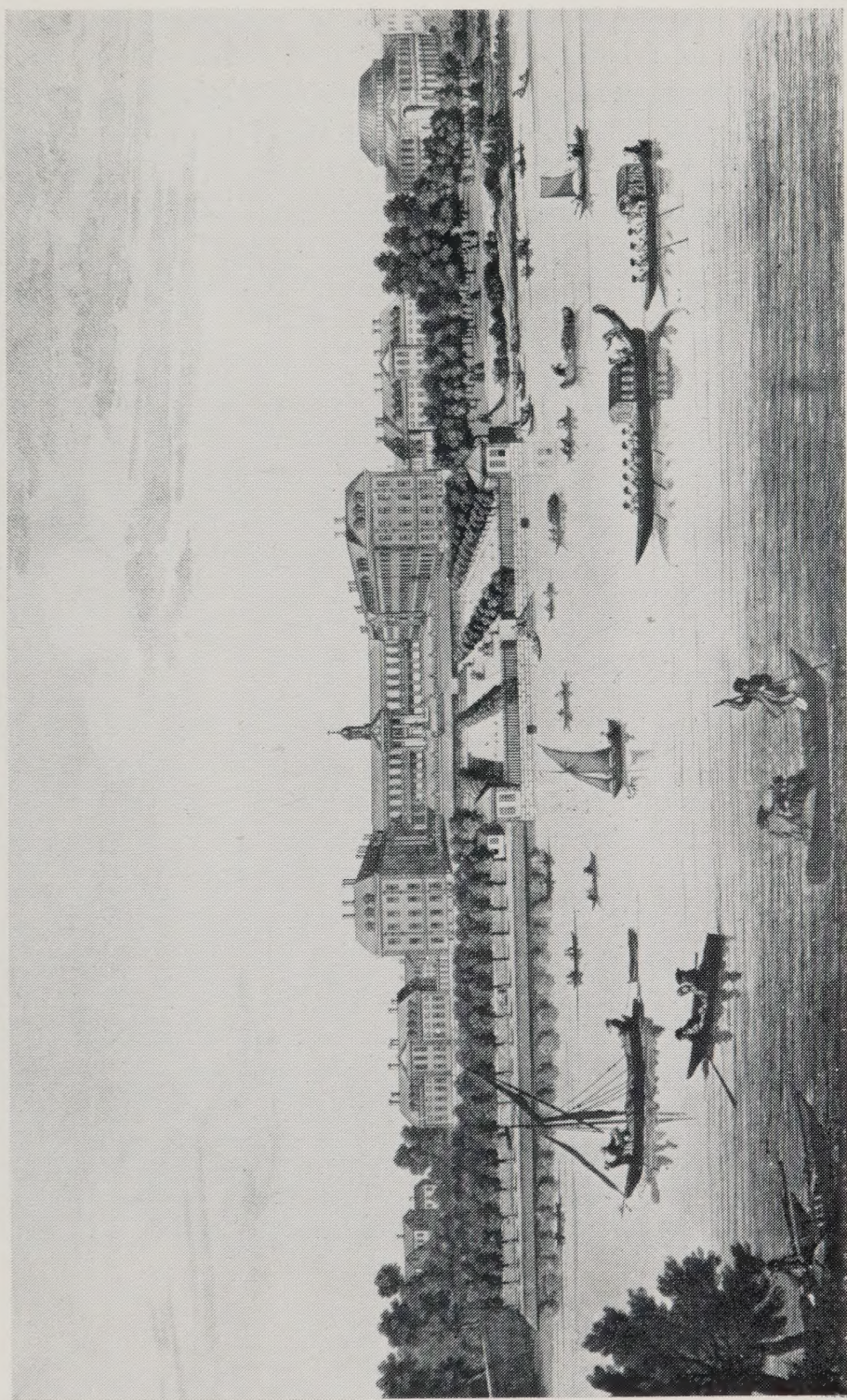
The site comprised about 30 acres of land, upon which stood a ruined building representing part of an intended theological college founded by James I in 1609. Its selection for the Royal Hospital was due to Sir Christopher Wren, who as the King's Surveyor-General of Works was called upon to design and erect the buildings. The property was bought by Sir Stephen Fox at his own expense and some additional land purchased in James II's reign ; but under William III nearly one-third of the Hospital property, including the site of the present Chelsea Barracks, was alienated to the Earl of Ranelagh, the Hospital Treasurer. Part of the estate thus formed was afterwards converted into the place of entertainment known as Ranelagh Gardens : but these Gardens and most of the adjoining property formerly belonging to the Hospital were subsequently repurchased by means of legacy funds.

The Buildings

The building designed by Wren for Charles II comprised a single quadrangle, that known as Figure Court ; but he added the ranges of building constituting Light Horse and Infirmary Courts in James II's reign, and many other buildings, most of which have disappeared, under William and Mary. Owing to Lord Ranelagh's mismanagement there was much delay in completing the Hospital, which was not taken into use until 1692. A few additions and some alterations were made while Robert Adam was Clerk of Works in 1765-92, and much greater changes by Sir John Soane, the architect of the Bank of England, who was responsible for nearly all the buildings now standing on the outer sides of the East and West Roads.



VIEW FROM NORTH-WEST, 1694



VIEW FROM THE RIVER, c. 1750

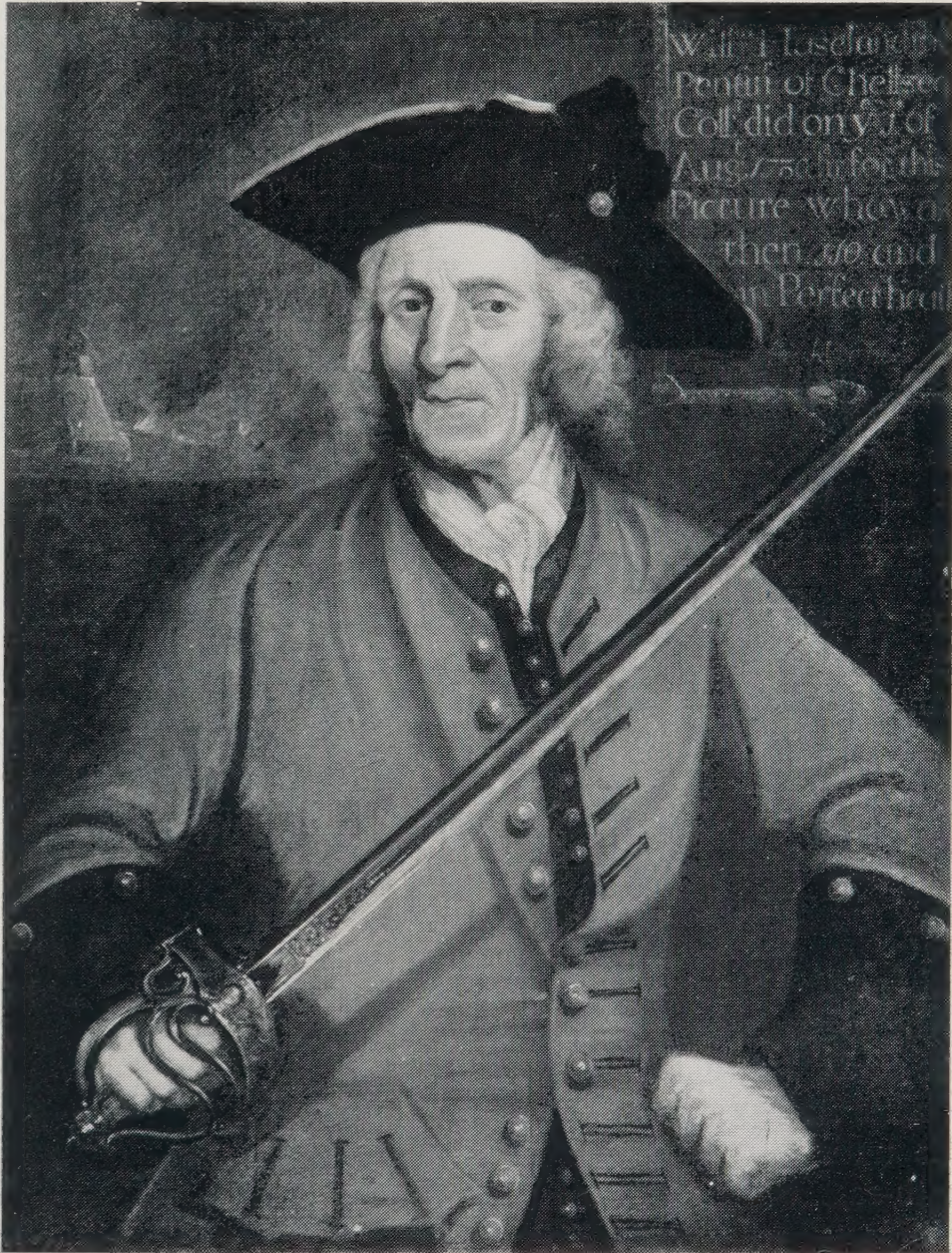
THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

Military Organisation

As intended by Charles II, the pensioners have always been organised on military lines, with a Governor and other officers. Originally there were eight companies formed from the Foot and Dragoons, and a ninth from the Horse, each with its proper complement of officers, N.C.O's. and drummers. The Foot were equipped with fusils, or light muskets, and the Light Horse with partisans, while the officers had half-pikes and the serjeants, halberds. Guard duties were onerous, particularly between 1715 and 1805, when an armed patrol was maintained by night on the road from the Royal Hospital to St. James's ; but the military duties are now virtually limited to attendance at Church and Pay parades. The military organisation has been preserved, and the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor are assisted by two Medical Officers, a Chaplain, Adjutant, Quartermaster, and six retired officers, styled Captains of Invalids, who command the six companies into which the pensioners are now divided.

The In-Pensioners

The In-Pensioners, who wear a modernised version of the service dress of the period of Marlborough's wars, number about 500. They are selected from out-pensioners of good character, unable to earn their own living, and must be at least 55 years of age, unless disabled in Army Service. On entering the Hospital an old soldier surrenders his out-pension, in return for which he is provided with his board and accommodation, clothing, a pint of beer daily or tobacco in lieu, and if not in receipt of the Contributory Old Age Pension, a small money allowance. Leave of absence is freely granted, and those who wish to do so may have a holiday at Netley in the summer. For the sick there is a well-equipped Infirmary, which, owing to the destruction of the old building, is temporarily accommodated in premises at Leatherhead.



George Alsop, 1730

IN-PENSIONER W. HISELAND

Great Hall

THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

AN ITINERARY OF THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

Visitors usually enter the Royal Hospital by the London Gate, Royal Hospital Road, which may, therefore, be taken as the starting point for our survey.

Burial Ground

This plot was consecrated in August, 1691, and closed in 1855. Between those dates over 10,000 pensioners and others were buried there, including William Cheselden, the father of modern surgery, and Dr. Burney, the father of Fanny Burney, the novelist, and friend of Dr. Johnson. Since 1855 burials have taken place first at Brompton Cemetery and latterly at Brookwood.

East Road Buildings

The small building next the Burial Ground, originally the *Main Guardhouse*, and the corresponding building at the far end of the road, are both by Wren. The intermediate range of buildings, constituting the *Secretary's Office*, stands on what was formerly part of the Governor's Garden. It was added by Soane in 1819 to accommodate the larger clerical staff required in view of the increased number of Army pensioners after the Napoleonic wars. All Army pensions, except those for wounds or disabilities due to war service, are still administered in this office.

Light Horse Court

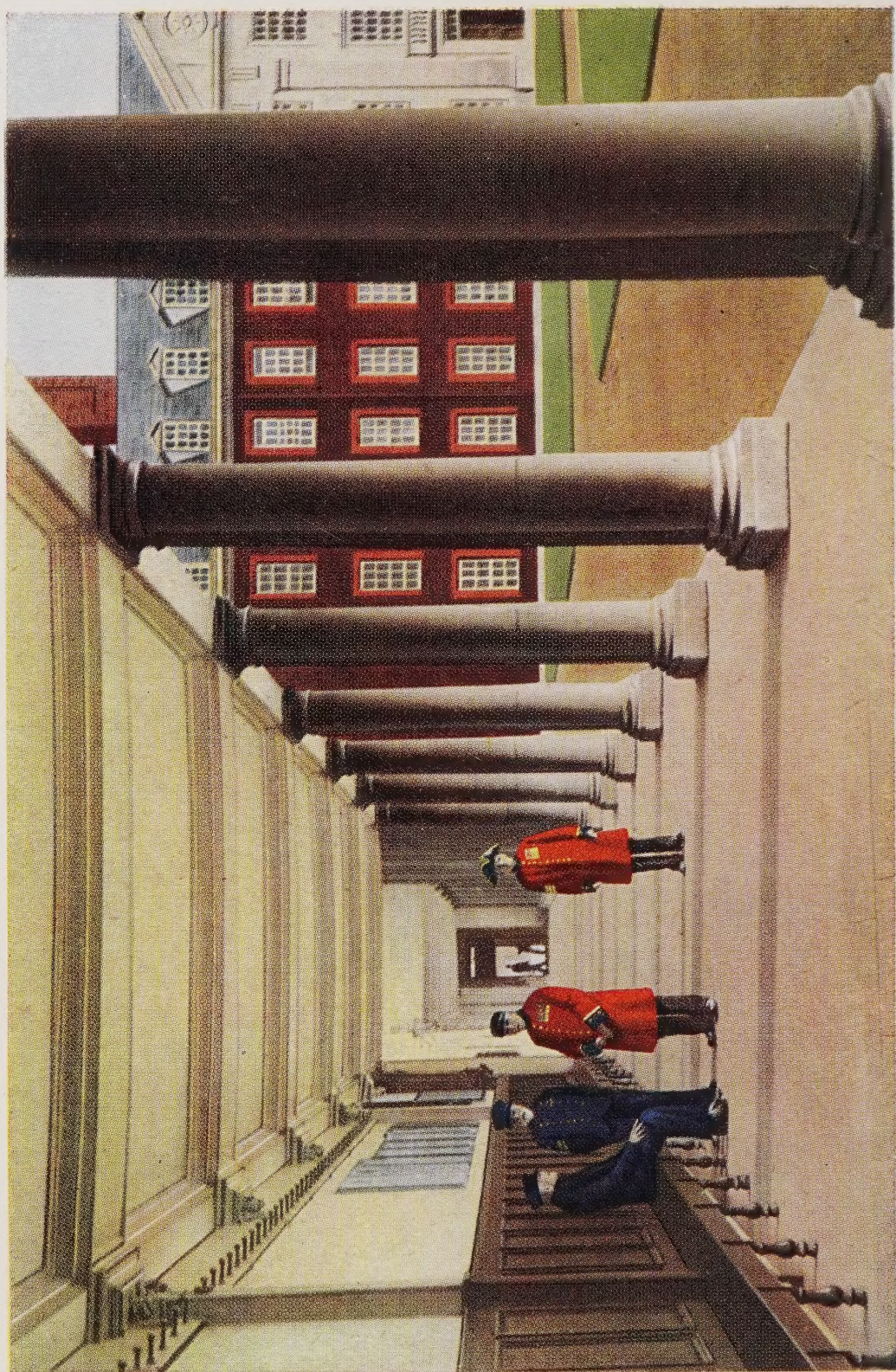
This quadrangle was added by Wren for James II in 1687-88. The court was originally a plain gravelled yard, and the fine wrought-iron cage and lamppost in the middle of the court protected a well from which horses were watered. The court was laid out in its present form by Soane in 1819. It takes its name from the Light Horse, or old cavalrymen, who until the abolition of that grade in 1850 occupied the south-east wing. The north-east wing comprised a number of officers' quarters, which were completely destroyed, with some loss of life, by enemy bombing in 1918 and 1945. Overlooking the court, on the second floor at the north-east angle of the main building, are the apartments occupied by Dr. Burney from 1798 until his death in 1814.

Figure Court

This is the oldest part of the Royal Hospital, begun by Wren in 1682. The pensioners' wards occupy the two wings, with officers' apartments at their ends; while the



FIGURE COURT



COLONNADE

LONG WARD





CHAPEL

THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

Chapel and Great Hall are situated on either side of the central portico. The wings are connected by a *colonnade*, the cornice of which bears a Latin inscription recording that the Hospital is for the accommodation and maintenance of deserving soldiers of long service or broken in the wars, and that it was founded by Charles II, enlarged by James II, and completed by William and Mary in 1692. The *statue of Charles II*, from which the court takes its name, is the work of Grinling Gibbons, and was presented to the King by Tobias Rustat, a faithful retainer. Originally gilded, it was bronzed in 1787.

Octagon Porch

The massive wooden doors to this porch are original, as are the iron fittings. In the porch, Chapel and Great Hall hang some laid-up British colours, as well as about 100 trophies captured from the Americans, Dutch, French, Prussians and Russians, and from various Oriental countries. They were mostly deposited at the Royal Hospital by order of William IV in 1833. Guns captured from the Dutch and French, and dated 1623 and 1706, respectively, flank the entrance to the porch from the north.

Chapel

The Chapel was completed by Wren in 1687. The wainscoting and pewing were by Sir Charles Hopson, except for the choir stalls, which are modern additions. Backs have been fitted to the benches, and the old "three-decker" has been dismantled to make the existing pulpit and reading-desk. The plasterwork was carried out by Henry Margetts, while the carving was half by William Emmett, Master Carver before Grinling Gibbons, and half by William Morgan. The carved gates in the altar rails cost £8, and the cherubim's heads on the walls £1 each. The organ case was made by Renatus Harris, but his organ has been replaced by a modern instrument. The painting of the Resurrection in the half dome of the apse is the work of Sebastiano Ricci and his nephew, Marco, about the end of Queen Anne's reign.

Particularly notable is the magnificent silver-gilt altar plate made by Ralph Leete and hall-marked 1687-88. It comprises a large alms dish, a pair of large candlesticks with baluster stems, a salver, three flagons, four chalices and patens, and a straining spoon. One of the original service books has also been preserved. The early Registers of



THE GREAT HALL

THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

Baptisms, Marriages and Burials have been removed to Somerset House, but the current Register of Baptisms is kept in the Vestry.

The Chapel was consecrated in August 1691. Services were formerly held twice daily. On Sundays the pensioners parade in Figure Court at 10.50 a.m., and visitors are welcomed at the Parade Service.

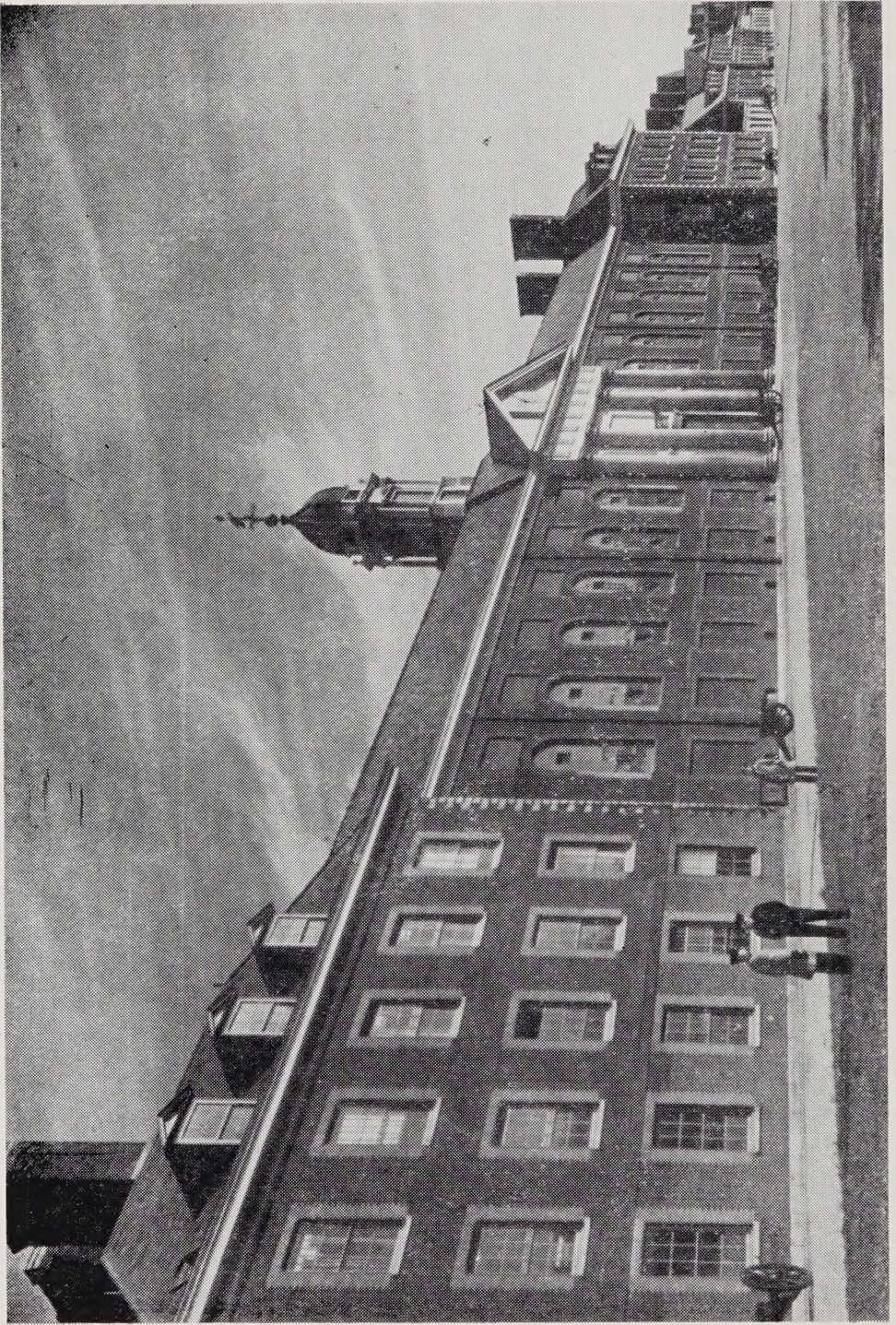
Great Hall

Until this dining hall fell into disuse towards the end of the 18th century, the pensioners of the 16 Long-Wards in the East and West Wings sat at 16 long tables arranged end to end in four rows. The Governor's Table was placed on the dais, and under the old regulations drawn up by Wren it was ordered that the pensioners should be served before the officers. During the past century the Hall has been utilised for courts martial, enquiries, Army entrance examinations, concerts, and most notably, the Duke of Wellington's lying-in-state. It is now used for recreational purposes.

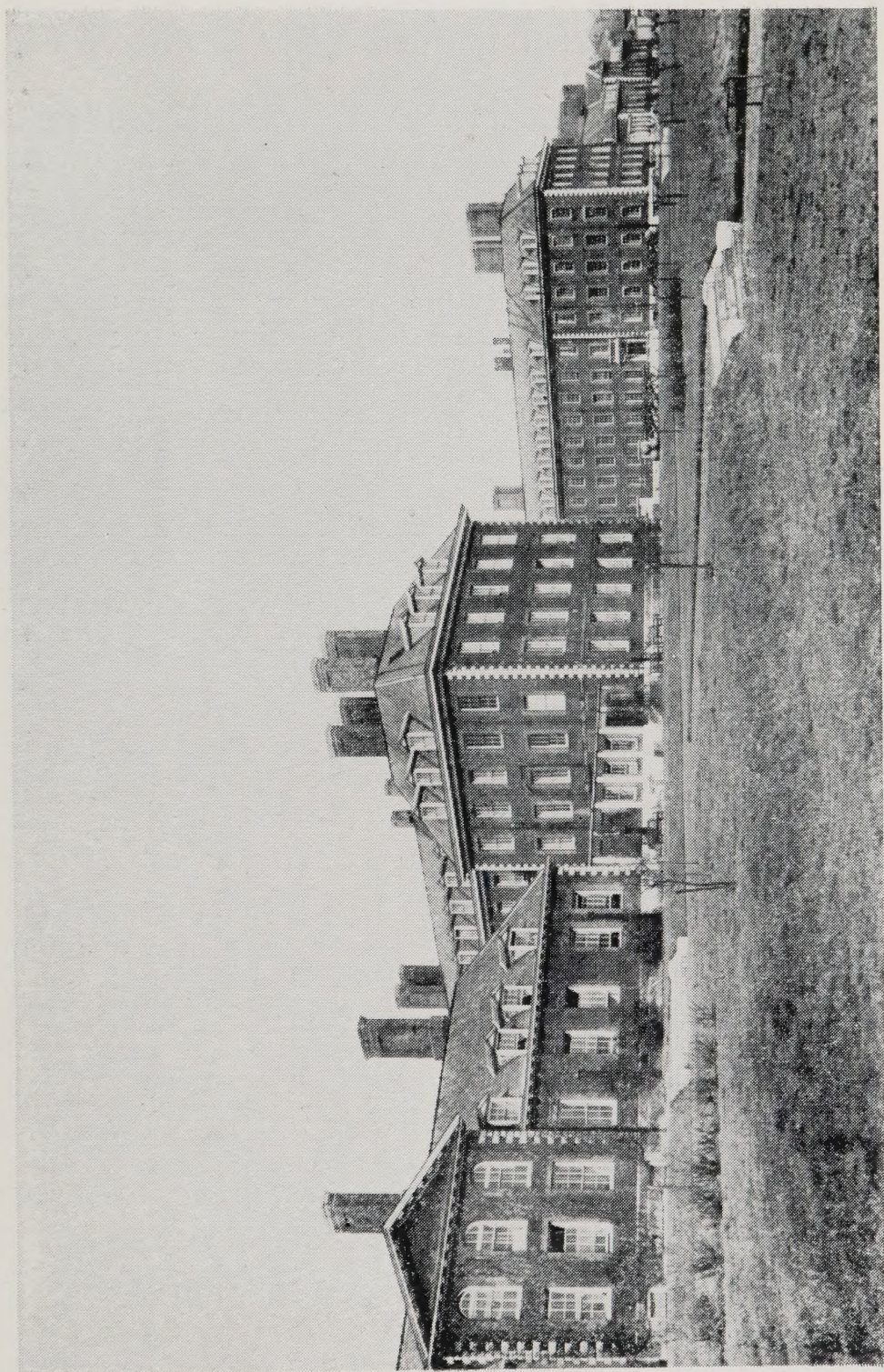
The large mural painting showing Charles II on horseback, with the Royal Hospital buildings in the background, was begun by Antonio Verrio, but is believed to be mainly the work of Henry Cooke. Among the royal portraits may be mentioned those of George II and Queen Caroline by Enoch Seeman, and of George III and Queen Charlotte by Allan Ramsay. There is also a likeness of William Hiseland, an In-Pensioner who married for the third time when over 100 years old, and who died at the age of 112. A curious epitaph may be seen on his tombstone in the Burial Ground. In the Great Hall are preserved eight "black jacks," large leather jugs in which beer was brought up from the cellars. There are some interesting prints, and a collection of over 700 medals left by deceased pensioners, and covering nearly every campaign from the Peninsula to the first Great War.

West Wing

The Great Kitchen has been modernised, and the old service of pewter is used only on Founder's Day, 29th May, and at Christmas. Across the lobby lies the main staircase which gives access to the wards. Each gallery or *Long Ward* contains 26 berths, divided into two messes, each with its own fireplace. The wainscoted berths are each fitted with a bed, built-in table, reading light and wireless headphones : an occupant may secure complete privacy by closing his door and wooden shutter.



NORTH FRONT



SOUTH TERRACE

THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

Infirmary Court

Like Light Horse Court, this quadrangle was added by Wren in 1687-88. The north-west wing contains the *Officers' Hall*, where the Officers and Light Horse dined, the *Servants' Hall*, and certain staff quarters. The south-west wing occupies the site of Chelsea College, fragments of which may be seen in the basement. This wing was designed as the Infirmary and so used until 1816, but has since been converted into staff quarters.

West Road Buildings

Most of the Wren buildings erected beyond the West Road in the reign of William and Mary have been swept away, and there only remain the old *Rear Guardhouse*, now the In-Pensioners' Library, and, at the lower end of the West Road, the old Barber's Shop, behind which lies the surviving portion of a row of cottages. Between 1809 and 1822 Sir John Soane built the existing Guardhouse ; the Stable-Yard, which occupies only half the space covered by Wren's Stable-Yard ; the large building opposite Infirmary Court, part of which was originally the laundry and the remainder the Surgeon's house, replacing an earlier building designed by Wren ; and the two small buildings which stand on either side of this last-mentioned building. Soane's Infirmary, situated behind the Stable-Yard, and his Artificers' Yard, which lay behind the old Guardhouse, were destroyed in 1941 by a landmine, which also caused many casualties among the patients and staff.

A gateway, with stone piers and handsome wrought-iron gates, at the lower end of the West Road gives access to the old *Greenhouse*, or Orangery, built by Sir John Vanbrugh for Sir Robert Walpole about 1725. Ten years earlier Walpole had obtained a grant of a house in the old Stable-Yard, which he enlarged and which was eventually incorporated in Soane's Infirmary. The remainder of Walpole's property was let on lease in 1809 to a Colonel Gordon. His house, since enlarged for use as the Nurses' Home, was built by Thomas Leverton, an architect of the Adam school.

South Terrace

The retaining wall was demolished, and much of the terrace removed a century ago, but the terminal walls and gateways, with their wrought-iron gates by Jean Tijou, have been preserved. Opposite Figure Court is a battery composed of four guns captured at Waterloo, two taken from the Sikhs at Chillianwallah, and two Chinese pieces. The



Fox Photo's Ltd.

FOUNDER'S DAY, 1947
Inspection by H.R.H. the Princess Elizabeth

THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

large spherical shells were designed for use with Mallet Mortars, which were not actually employed as intended, in the siege of Sebastopol.

Council Chamber

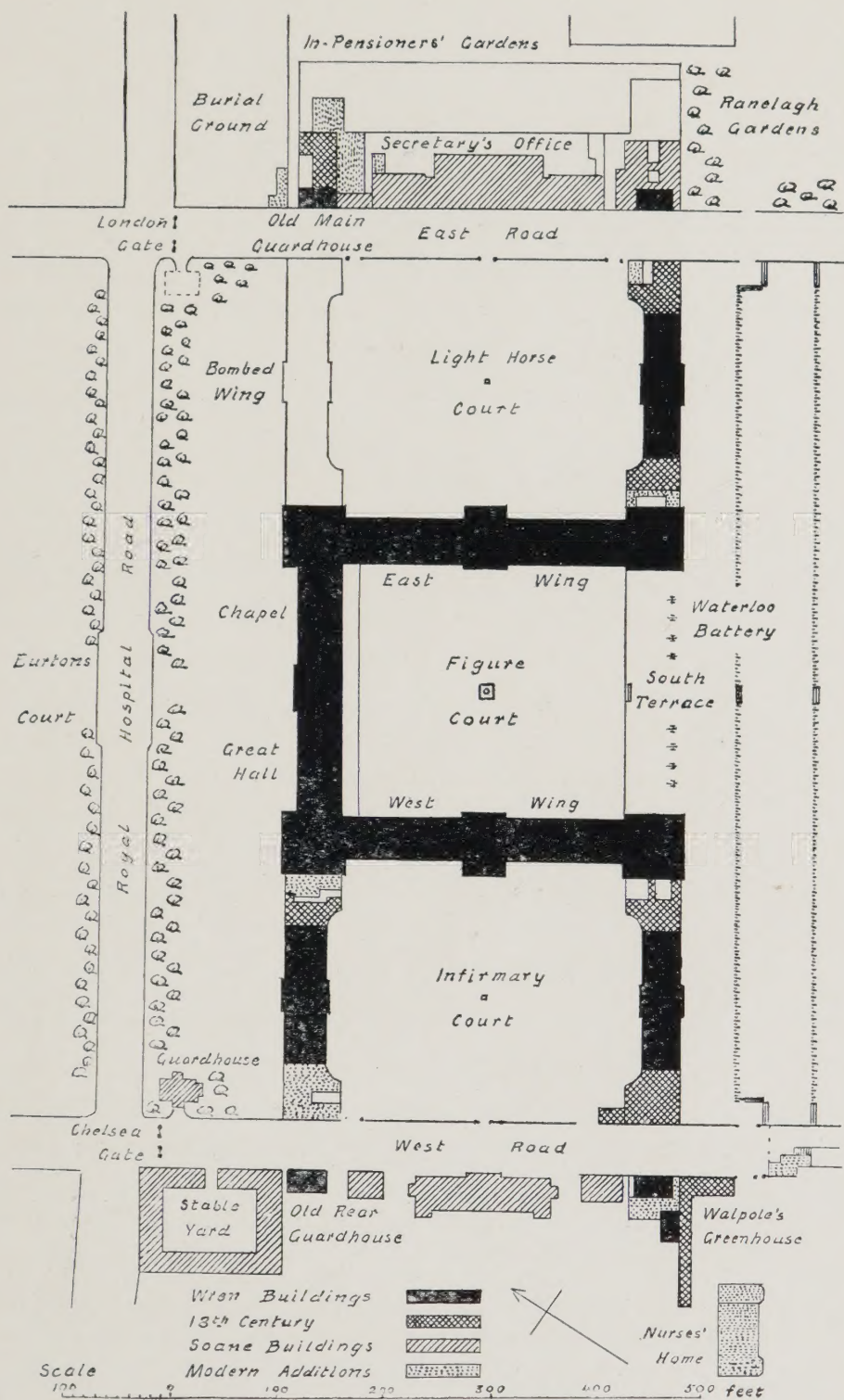
This fine room was designed, and is now used, as the Board Room for the Chelsea Commissioners, but for many years it formed part of the Governor's apartments. The heavily moulded ceiling, displaying James II's cypher, is by John Grove, the wainscoting by William Cleere, and the fine limewood carving over the fireplace by William Emmett. The room was redecorated by Robert Adam, when Clerk of Works : and the chimney piece, gilt girandoles, some tables and the state chair and footstool date from this period. The conversation piece of Charles I and his family is by Van Dyck or possibly Ramee van Leemput. There are portraits by Lely of Charles II and Queen Catherine, James, Duke of York, and the Earl of Ranelagh ; by Kneller of William III and Nell Gwynne ; by Mary Beale of Sir Stephen Fox, and by Jacomb-Hood after Kneller of Sir Christopher Wren.

The entrance lobby contains a view of Chelsea Reach by Peter Tillemans about 1727. In the ante-room is a painting of Figure Court, by Dirk Maas about 1717, and an allegorical picture by James Ward depicting the triumph of the Duke of Wellington. The third door in the Council Chamber gave access to a dark closet, formerly furnished with a close-stool.

The Grounds

Wren's magnificent formal gardens, for which the Royal Hospital was formerly renowned, were all swept away in 1850-68, when the Embankment was made. The present Ranelagh Gardens, which incorporate the old pleasure gardens of that name, were laid out afresh by John Gibson about 1860. No vestiges remain of the Rotunda, Ranelagh House, Prospect Place, or any other buildings erected on the Ranelagh estate. The In-Pensioners' Gardens and Bowling Green occupy ground formerly devoted to the Governor's and Physic Gardens.

To the north of Royal Hospital Road, which was driven across the Hospital property in 1846, lies Burton's Court, with its Porter's Lodge and old *Fore Guardhouse* flanking the Main Entrance gates to the Royal Hospital. The Royal Avenue was laid out to communicate with what was then the King's private road, and was intended only for use on state occasions.



PLAN OF THE BUILDINGS

THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

NOTE FOR VISITORS

The Royal Hospital is served by Nos. 11, 39, 46 and 137 buses, and is about ten minutes' walk from Sloane Square Underground station.

The grounds are open to the public daily, except Sundays, from 10 a.m. during November, December, January and February, and from 9 a.m. during the remaining months: on Sundays the time of opening is 1 p.m. The hour of closing varies from 4 p.m. in December to 8.30 p.m. in July and is indicated by a notice at the gates. All the times of opening and closing are one hour later during Summer Time.

The buildings may be inspected on weekdays from 10 a.m. until noon, and from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. or the hour at which the grounds are closed, if earlier.

On Sundays visitors may attend the Chapel Services. Holy Communion is at 8.30 a.m. and after the Parade Service, which starts at 11 a.m.

The Council Chamber is open to visitors only on Saturdays from 2 to 4 p.m., and on Sundays immediately after the Parade Service.

During these hours the public are admitted to any part of the grounds and buildings, except Burton's Court. If desired, an In-Pensioner guide may be obtained on application to the Adjutant at least three days beforehand. A tour of the buildings takes about an hour, and a fee of 5s. is payable to each guide employed. A special permit is required for admission to Burton's Court, and also for the admission of perambulators or bathchairs into Ranelagh Gardens.

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